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Food and Home Notes

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Women in Agriculture

SOUTH DAKOTA FARM WIFE IS ACTIVE PRESIDENT OF NATIONAL EXTENSION HOMEMAKERS COUNCIL



Mrs. Fayola Muchow

Enthusiasm is the mother of effort! Without it nothing great was ever accomplished, according to Fayola Muchow, South Dakota farm wife and president of the National Extension Homemakers council. This is an organization steeped in Americana with 600,000 member homemakers in 27,000 clubs in 42 states.

Who are the National Extension Homemakers? A recent survey indicates that approximately one third of them live on farms; another 25% in the country (but not on farms); another 25% in towns under 10,000 population. Extension homemakers are better educated than the average woman. Nearly half of them have finished four years of high school (compared to about a third of women nationally). Twenty-seven percent have had some college and/or graduated, compared to 18% of the female population nationally. Only 29.5% are employed, as against 41.4% of the total female population above 16 years of age who are employed outside the home.

Part of the strength of any organization lies in the leadership. A graduate nurse by profession, Mrs Muchow has built her program for NEH by helping others to build on the volunteer concept. As President, Mrs. Muchow is interested in further strengthening heritage skills and the cultural arts with their organization. More -
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Farm wife (con't from page 1)

She believes in relating to people on a one-to-one basis and is anxious to project leadership towards family life, health and safety. One of the major thrusts of the Homemakers Council is to relate to/and aid handicapped homemakers.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

In addition to her responsibilities with the National Homemakers group, she is also active in church and civic duties. One of the United Way committees to which she is devoted involves urban and rural communication. She feels this is an important area where there is a great lack of understanding.

LIFE ON THE FARM

"One difference between life on the farm and in the city is a matter of time priorities. Too often urban people do not use time to participate with their children and to experience what they are experiencing in life." On the farm, Mrs. Muchow says, "almost by necessity, you must stay with the child and explain and teach. The links made by this type of interchange are integral parts of the attitudes developed by young people," she continued.

Even though she attends a number of meetings around the country and often around the world (she went to Australia for a meeting last fall with the Associated Countrywomen of the World), she maintains a pace at home. Today--just as she did 32 years ago, she enjoys her partnership with her husband which includes actively working on their 280 acre farm near Sioux Falls, South Dakota. She regularly drives the tractor in the fields just as her husband still dries the dishes after meals at home--just as they have done for more than 30 years.



Farm wife - con't

It's more than just the idea of "helping" each other, it's the opportunity of being together and sharing what each is doing, according to Mrs. Muchow.

When the Muchows were first married they were given some land by Mr. Muchow's family -- and they had 50 chickens and six pigs to start. Now their poultry farm has more than 9,000 laying hens.

In addition to taking care of all the farm records, Mrs. Muchow also maintains a garden and enjoys canning, preserving and baking everything by the "dozens" to go into their two freezers.

Mrs. Muchow's family proves the point that farm families today are changing. All three of the Muchow's children are college-educated...two sons excelled in agricultural economics and their daughter graduated in Food Science. Unlike many farm people of a decade ago who left the farm for the city, the Muchow's sons and daughter--and even their son-in-law have future plans for their own farms.



South Dakota Extension Service

Photos by Le Ann Birch

Farm wife - con't

EXTENSION HOMEMAKER MAP PLANS

The annual fall conference for the National Extension Homemakers will focus on the "Wonderful World of Women". The theme of the September conference will be to point up the abilities of women and to provide further assistance in leadership development.

Each state also plans participation in the International Women's Year Programs to further the efforts of women, to assume more responsible and active roles in their home, communities and the world.

BICENTENNIAL PROJECT

The National Extension Homemakers project for the Bicentennial is a travel book compiled by the Homemakers called "Treasure Trails in the USA". It features state maps, trails, sightseeing and historical information. It will serve as a guide to the many treasures of our heritage according to the NEH president, whose words are often echoed after her visits around the country..."it's a time for resting ideas -- like dormant seeds to begin new growth, so let each of us grow where we are planted".



NOTE: Additional information for the MEDIA and photographs (when applicable) may be obtained from: Shirley Wagener, Editor of Food and Home Notes, Room 535-A Office of Communication/Press Division, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250. Or telephone 202-447-5898